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SUBJECT: PM TARLEV UPBEAT ON USG CFE PROPOSALS

REF: STATE 146521

Classified By: Ambassador Michael D. Kirby for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary. DAS Kramer briefed Prime Minister Tarlev on U.S. efforts to persuade Russia not to suspend participation on CFE. Tarlev appreciated our efforts and stressed that getting Russian forces out of Transnistria soon would help to resolve the Transnistria conflict. Kramer's urging of Moldova to participate more actively in GUAM elicited support for GUAM, but also evinced Moldovan frustration with GUAM's operating style. Tarlev expressed guarded optimism that Moldova might increase the size of Moldova's modest Iraq contingent. Finally, Tarlev suggested that the GOM was favorably inclined to provide us with a good site for a new embassy. End summary.

CFE and Transnistria

12. (C) During an October 19 meeting with Moldovan Prime Minister Vasile Tarlev, DAS Kramer Ambassador Kirby briefed him on the recent Moscow discussions on CFE (Ref A). Tarlev responded that the GOM would consider carefully Kramer's suggestions for a three-step approach on keeping Russia from suspending participation in the CFE while protecting Moldova's interests. The Prime Minister highly appreciated U.S. urgings that Russia comply with its Istanbul commitments. Tarlev offered his basic analysis: if Russia wanted to remove its munitions from Colbasna quickly, it could. He added that the women who blocked the rails were simply the spouses of Russian military personnel. Indeed, Tarlev emphasized, the Russian peacekeeping forces in Transnistria (TN) were, in fact, the destabilizing factor in the region. The faster those Russian forces could be withdrawn and replaced by a civilian contingent, in Tarlev's opinion, the better as he believes that the Transnistrian regime would collapse without Russian troops to prop them up. Russia could, of course, participate in such a civilian force, Tarlev thought.

13. (C) In response to Ambassador Kirby's briefing on the recent 3 plus 2 talks in Vienna, Tarlev noted that Moldova wanted the 5 plus 2 negotiations to restart, but hoped that meetings would discuss substantive matters. DAS Kramer lauded recent GOM efforts to reach out to Transnistria. That was just the right approach during the 5 plus 2 stalemate, Kramer observed, to demonstrate that Moldova was one country and that Chisinau leaders were open to dialogue with the Transnistrians. The Prime Minister welcomed dialogue with the Transnistrians, including Ambassador Kirby's efforts to engage TN authorities and civil society. Tarlev noted that TN officials had told right-bank counterparts that the Transnistrians could not make their own decisions and had to wait for Moscow's approval before proceeding on important matters. Tarlev believed that the authority of the TN leaders was lessening.

14. (C) Tarlev praised EUBAM's work and stated that he believed it had stopped the export of arms from TN. He urged that EUBAM's mission be extended indefinitely and widened significantly to include monitoring along the green zone, through which contraband continues to flow, and to monitor not only TN exports but also imports. Within the last eight months, Tarlev averred, TN had imported per capita eight times more meat and poultry than the average German consumed. Contraband, Tarlev concluded. All movements, including Russian investments, as well as contraband into and out of TN went through Ukraine. Tarlev said that in his opinion Ukraine was key to a Transnistrian solution.

GUAM, Iraq and MCC

15. (C) Turning to GUAM, Kramer noted the increasing role GUAM is playing in the region as the organization takes on a life of its own. Tarlev agreed that GUAM has good prospects and that GUAM has become a stronger institution. Of course, GUAM's activities could be more dynamic and GUAM could undertake more joint projects, Tarlev added. Alluding to President Voronin's non-participation in the GUAM summit in Baku (Tarlev attended in his stead), Tarlev noted that GUAM could prepare its meetings more carefully and with more lead-time. Moldova had been irritated that because of short notice it could not participate in the summit at the highest level. He concluded his comments on GUAM by saying Moldova wanted to be more active in GUAM.

16. (C) DAS Kramer then brought up Iraq by noting DASD Debra Cagan's recent visit and reiterating the USG's request that Moldova increase the size of its contingent of deminers.

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Kramer told the Prime Minister that the U.S. did not take for granted Moldova's contributions to coalition efforts in Iraq and appreciated the political difficulties the government faced in approving each contingent. Tarlev responded that the government initially encountered much more opposition to sending contingents to Iraq. Now critics' arguments had been addressed and were no longer valid, he opined. Tarlev reiterated his high estimation of U.S.-Moldovan relations, the high credibility the U.S. enjoyed in Moldova, and the close and productive U.S.-Moldovan cooperation in many fields. "I will do everything possible to maintain this relationship in all spheres," he concluded.

17. (C) As Tarlev has pushed his government strongly on MCC preparations, Ambassador Kirby raised the elaboration of Moldova's MCC Compact proposal. Having heard President Voronin earlier in the day raise the importance of maintaining Moldovan public support during the long proposal-review process, the Ambassador reviewed USG expectations. He said we expect to get a proposal from the GOM as early as December. The U.S. would then make a rapid preliminary review of the submission and by sometime in March or April 2008 be ready to see how we might be able to assist with the review process. We understand, Kirby underscored, that early, positive, and tangible signs would send a strong signal to the Moldovan population that the U.S. continues to stand with Moldova.

A New Embassy Compound

18. (U) The Ambassador concluded the meeting by raising the issue of a new embassy compound. He noted that the recently demolished Republican Stadium could serve as a potential site if it became available. The old stadium was in the center of town, a good location like the Russian Embassy. Tarlev said the stadium location was a good idea and that, as far as the executive branch was concerned, it would do all it could to support such a possibility. Various government offices were already analyzing this idea; Tarlev and the MFA had even

discussed the idea with President Voronin. The GOM would respond to the Embassy's request soon, he promised.

19. (U) DAS Kramer cleared this cable.

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